

# VARIATION OF CURRENT RECIPROCITY BETWEEN LAND OWNERS AND FARM WORKERS BASED ON LABOR WAGES AND WORKING HOURS

Imam Santosa,

*Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Jenderal Soedirman University, Indonesia*

Muslihudin, Muslihudin,

*Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Jenderal Soedirman University, Indonesia*

Wiwiek R. Adawiyah,

*Department of Management, Faculty of Economic and Business, Jenderal Soedirman University, Indonesia*

## ABSTRACT

Sustainable rural development has affected some factors. One of them is the reciprocity relationships. The study aims to describe the variety of current reciprocity between land owner's farmers and landless laborers based on laborer's wages and time allocation for work accomplished. The research location was determined intentionally in the rural areas of Purbalingga Regency and Banyumas Regency, Central Java Province, Indonesia. This study used a qualitative method with phenomenological research design. The results showed that there are variations in the form of reciprocity based on work wages and the outpouring of time allocation and wage levels. High and intensive time spent in work tends to get rewards in the form of high wages, and vice versa, but behind that, there is an interesting social dimension, namely the discovery of other social rewards that are not only quantitative but in the form of other forms of social services, such as: adding extra food, consumption, smoking facility and any kind of hospitality. Based on the conclusions obtained, it can be recommended to farmer groups and policymakers at the regional level, that it is necessary to increase the level of wages that are adequate under the time spent, both for farmers with asymmetrical relationships to be maintained, and also to reduce social inequality for farmworkers in asymmetrical relationships. It is necessary to have internal farmer group dynamics and be supported by local government policies that encourage more standard labor wage regulations and can increase the purchasing power of farming communities, especially farmworkers to a better level.

**Keywords:** current reciprocity, landowners, farmer laborers, labor wages and working hours

## INTRODUCTION

Improving the quality of human resources has always been one of the priority goals of national development in various developing countries. Therefore, the development process needs to have a balance so that the various interests of the economic, social, cultural, political, technological, environmental and other sectors. Strong development provides opportunities for the community to be independent with productive behavior by utilizing local resources for the necessities of life (Suartha et al., 2014 ; Dumasari et al., 2020). Farmers are a group of people who need

to be independent and have productive behavior in rural areas. The development of the quality of farmers' resources requires empowerment, including the development of reciprocity relationships in order to obtain job eligibility and wages. It is important for farmers to have soft skills and hard skills in the application of technology to develop livelihood diversification (Fang et al., 2014). Another need for farmer empowerment is the existence of adaptive management that is sensitive to the conditions and potential of local resources (Dumasari et al., 2021).

Sustainable agricultural development is determined by many things. One of them is the sustainability of community farming. The tendency of land scarcity on the island of Java, which is inhabited by more than 67% of the nation total population, is one of the triggers. The trend of land reciprocal bonds, such as social realities lead to several different forms of social ties for each farm.

The existence of a reciprocal relationship has several forms in the dynamics of rural farming communities. The form of reciprocal relationships is determined by various factors, which can come from personal factors, surrounding social norms, and other external influences. (Molm et al., 2007; Thomas & Caillon, 2016 ; Jana et al., 2013). It is undeniable that many parties are trying to evaluate the reciprocal relationship that occurs. Such social realities lead to reciprocity, which can be symmetrical, asymmetrical, and other reciprocal relationships. Several previous studies from (Santosa et al., 2019a ; Wiwiek R. Adawiyah, 2021 ; Santosa et al., 2020) found different relations between farm laborers and farmer-owners for farmers in rural and urban areas.

Rural farmers who are far from urban areas tend to experience an asymmetric relationship and conversely, while rural farmers who are relatively close to urban areas tend to be symmetrical. In society, the reciprocal relationship between farmers and farm laborers in rural Central Java, Indonesia is indeed interesting to be studied, especially in the context of variations in reciprocity based on the outpouring of working time and wage levels. Balance is a satisfactory achievement target between the parties involved in reciprocity and one of the determinants of the relationship.

The balance in question is related to the allocation of time spent and the level of wages. A high amount of time tends to get rewards in the form of high wages, and vice versa, but behind that, there is an interesting social dimension, namely the discovery of other social rewards that are not only quantitative but in the form of other social services. In this context, it seems that Blau has not specifically explained such collaboration (Blau, 1974 ; Homans, 1974). Blau states that if formerly, the reciprocal is asymmetrical, it usually consisted of a relationship that being inserted by power, then it shifts from asymmetrical to symmetrical

form, and that is a social dimension that Blau does not capture.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Farming communities are unique in social life in rural areas. Various forms of ties are established to fulfill economic, social, and cultural interests (Santosa et al., 2021). The difference in socioeconomic status shows that farmers have a distinctive social relationship (Diekmann, 2004). The bonds of solidarity and collectivity make the relationship stronger.

The relationship of reciprocity which originally led to the patron-client bond slowly shifted into subordinates and employers. Whereas reciprocity has a strategic function and value for the durability of farmer relationships (Martínez Valle & Martínez Godoy, 2019). Reciprocity is beneficial for farming communities in managing their farms through the adoption of production technology (Molm et al., 2007). The effects of market penetration and commercialization also influence the shift in the form of social relations in farming communities with various strata, especially landowners and farm laborers as daily workers (Lanfranchi et al., 2015). There is also a working relationship between landowners and farmworkers based on a profit-sharing system at harvest time.

Provisions on wage levels for farmworkers do not yet have a standard according to the regional minimum wage (Baldassarri, 2015). The level of wages received by farmworkers tends to be determined by agreement, bargaining, and the principle of cooperation to help each other. The agricultural labor market takes place according to a strong agrarian culture.

The social reality that shows that the wages of farm laborers are not yet decent has an effect on the problem of poverty (Diana et al., 2015; Jana et al., 2013) Farm laborers work only according to orders from landowners. Farmworkers cannot choose a profitable job because it depends on the request of the landowner. Farmworkers also do not have the opportunity to make decisions regarding the use of agricultural technology that can increase production yields every season. During the famine season or nearing the harvest season, the working farmers are unemployed, so there is no income from farming.

Determination of wages for farmworkers is determined by several factors, especially the proximity to landowners and the amount of time they work. The type of wages received by farmworkers is not only in the form of cash. However, there are also non-cash forms such as food and drinks in addition. This condition of farm workers certainly requires empowerment, especially in improving business capabilities, not in on-farm work but also off-farm work (Vanwey & Vithayathil, 2013).

### MATERIAL AND METHOD

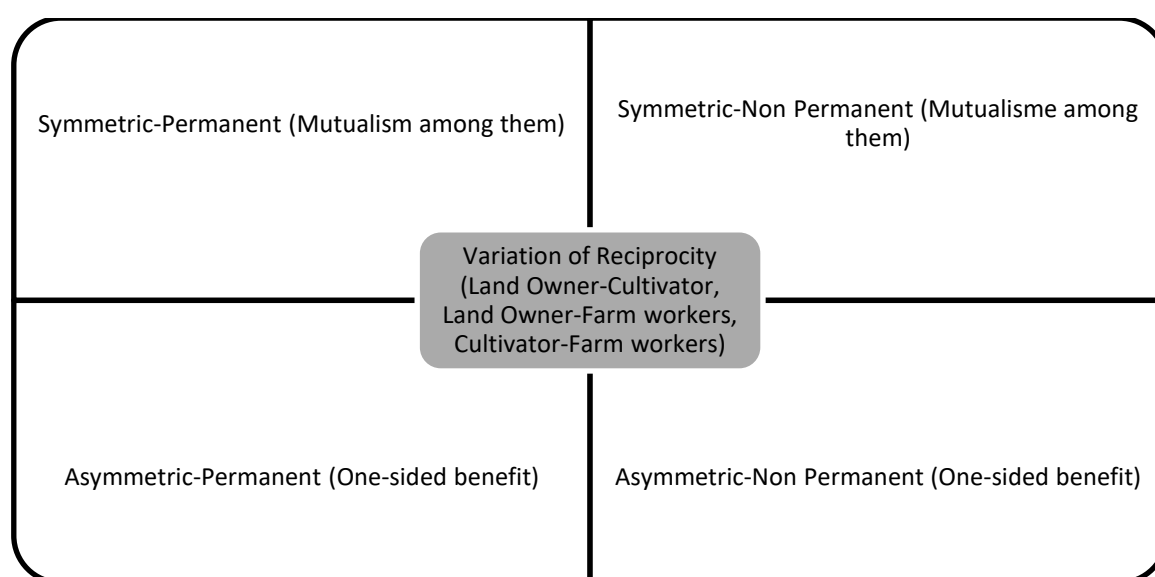
This study uses phenomenological research methods. The design used uses a qualitative approach. This approach is intended for researchers to understand the personal experiences studied in more depth. Furthermore, the qualitative approach is oriented so that researchers are not biased in a rigid, monotonous and stereotyped patterns. The research was conducted in two regencies, namely Purbalingga Regency and Banyumas Regency. For Purbalingga Regency, two sub-districts were taken, namely Kutasari District and Padamara District. For Banyumas Regency, two sub-districts were taken, namely Kembaran District and Sumbang District. Both regencies are part of the province of Central Java, Indonesia. The criteria for selecting the four locations were based on the consideration that the four sub-districts had a high land conversion rate and an increasing number of

farm laborers. The four areas are relevant to the research theme, namely the reciprocity relationship between owner farmers and farm laborers. The research data consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from informants through in-depth interviews. Other data collection techniques are through observation and focus group discussions. Secondary data was obtained through document analysis. Data processing and analysis techniques were carried out qualitatively. The data analysis technique used an interactive model (M.B. Miles and A.M. Huberman, 1991). Data triangulation is used to determine the truth of the information conveyed by the informants.

### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of research on reciprocity, four classification patterns were found, namely permanent symmetrical, non-permanent symmetrical, permanent asymmetrical and non-permanent asymmetrical. Of course, each condition of such symbiosis brings different consequences to the community, for example asymmetrical conditions are certainly very unfavorable for one party, especially if the asymmetry is permanent.

There are parties who are harmed for an undetermined long period of time, but these aggrieved parties cannot make efforts to change towards a balance form of reciprocity. Such classification is summarized in Figure 1.



Sources : Primary data, 2021 (to be analysed)

Figure 1. Type of Reciprocity

While for permanent symmetric, it has a strong motive both socially, economically and culturally. Except for asymmetrical condition all three relation have a strong relationship and support each other. Both social groups, both farm laborers and owner farmers, mutually strengthen their relationship to obtain mutual benefits. For the second classification, which is not permanent symmetry, it is found that there are strong motives only in the economic field, but for less strong motives in other fields. They

maintain social relations only because of economic relations, but in fact their social relations are vulnerable. This fact can be illustrated that if they get a patron who gives a slightly higher reward, they may leave their old patron. Not so for the first type mentioned earlier (Dumasari et al., 2019 ; Santosa et al., 2019b ; Santosa et al., 2020). Each group which is a classification has a different reciprocity motivation as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. The nature, characteristics and motives of reciprocity**

No.	Type of Reciprocity	Characteristics and motives of reciprocity	Motives		
			Social	Economic	Culture
1.	Symmetric-Permanent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The exchange of services and materials is balanced and in accordance with the agreement between land owners and sharecroppers, owner farmers with laborers and farmers with farm laborers.</li> <li>-Relationships last from one growing season to the next</li> <li>-Relatively long working relationship</li> <li>-High mutual trust</li> <li>-There is emotional closeness</li> <li>-Wage is mutually agreed.</li> <li>-High communication effectiveness.</li> <li>-High social interaction</li> </ul>	Dominant Strong	Dominant Strong	Dominant Strong
2.	Symmetric-Non-Permanent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The exchange of services and materials is balanced and in accordance with the agreement between land owners and tenant farmers, owner farmers with laborers and smallholders with farm laborers</li> <li>-Relationship takes place in a certain growing season</li> <li>-Relatively short working relationship even though they have known each other for a long time</li> <li>-Mutual trust</li> <li>-Little or no emotional closeness</li> <li>-Wages are mutually agreed</li> <li>-Medium effectiveness communication only when needed</li> </ul>	Dominant-Middle	Dominant-Strong	Dominant Middle
3.	Asymmetric-Permanent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The exchange of services and materials is not yet, less or not balanced because it is determined unilaterally by the land owner. Although it was agreed by both</li> </ul>	Dominant Strong	Dominant Middle	Dominant Strong

		parties between owner farmers and sharecroppers, owner farmers and laborers and sharecroppers with farm laborers, the position of one party was weak. -Relationship takes place in a certain growing season or several growing seasons -Working relationships can be short and long -High mutual trust -Emotional closeness exists and is high -Wages are mutually agreed or unilaterally -High effectiveness and routine communication -High and routine social interaction			
4.	Asymmetric-Non-Permanent	-The exchange of services and materials is not yet, less or not balanced because it is determined unilaterally by the land owner. Although it was agreed by both parties between owner farmers and sharecroppers, owner farmers and laborers and sharecroppers with farm laborers, the position of one party was weak. -Relationship takes place in a certain growing season -Working relationship can be short -Mutual trust -Minimal emotional closeness -Wages are mutually agreed or unilaterally -Low effectiveness communication -Low social interaction	Non-dominant - Weak	Non-dominant Weak	Non-dominant Weak

Sources : Primary data (2021)

The third type is permanent asymmetry. This relationship is very unfavorable for farmworkers. They could be said to have no choice in the face of unfavorable pressure. The illustration of asymmetrical relationship cases could come from one last generation to another in the long term, with the farm laborers being paid in a relatively quite low wages and still “willing” to accept it. Farmworkers may try to find other alternative jobs, but because the alternative jobs are located far away, they end up accepting jobs as farm laborers with low incomes. In such a social context, Freire (1990) asserts that they are always introduced to survival with a pseudo-consciousness, that they

must accept the job as it is. Furthermore, the last type is asymmetrical – not permanent.

In this type of classification, there are indeed asymmetric colors and workers feel that they are not benefited, but it doesn't take long, they soon realize and the job market provides other alternative jobs. He can change jobs to become protectors of other landowners who is much more profitable or can also move to protectors of the non-agricultural sector. Furthermore, the condition of the relationship between farm laborers and owner farmers can be seen in Table 2. In the table, this phenomenon reveals that different time allocations produce different wages for different workers. Of course, this situation is

very natural to occur in various places, but something is interesting in the social context of this research, namely the difference in labor wages for urban and rural areas.

There is a tendency for wages to be higher in urban rather than in rural areas. This is seen in Table 2. Those who work less than 6 hours per day in villages that close to urban areas tend to be higher. On average around Rp. 45,000, for wages in rural areas far from urban areas with

only Rp. 35,000. Meanwhile, for a longer time (7 hours per day) near urban areas, Rp. 60,000, which is far from the countryside, the wage is around Rp. 50,000. Furthermore, for workers who spend relatively long days in fields far from urban areas, about Rp. 70,000 and the close ones can reach Rp. 80,000 and even then plus eating facilities, snacks, and cigarettes for male workers. The description of this condition is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. Differences in Farm Workers' Wages Based on Variations in Working Time**

Differences in working time	Wage's level (Rp/day)		Adding facility
	Rural areas that near the urban areas	Rural area that far from urban areas	
Less than a half day (< 6 hour per work day)	45.000	35.000	Morning snack Lunch Tea drink Coffee
A halfday (7 hour per workday)	60.000	50.000	Morning snack Tea Coffee Cigaretes for man laborers
More than a half day (>7 hour per work dayj)	80.000	70.000	Morning snack Lunch Evening Snack Tea Coffee Cigaretes for man laborers

Sources : Primary data, 2021 (to be analysed)

It appears from the wage data that nothing is interesting because it is a trend, but if you look closely, it turns out that other social dimensions are not caught in the form of social

rewards. Although not in the form of money workers are very enthusiastic, namely by the form of morning snacks, lunch, tea, coffee, cigarettes and getting time location for smoking.

**Table 3. Determination of Wage Levels in Varied Reciprocity Relationships**

Resiprocity Variation	Determination of wage's level	
	Rural that near urban areas	Rural that far from the urban areas
Simetric-Permanent	Land Owners-Farmers	Land Owners-Farmers
Simetric-Non Permanent	Land Owners-Farmers	Farmers
Asimetric -Permanent	Land Owners-Farmers	Land Owners
Asimetric-Non Permanent	Land Owners-Farmersi	Land Owners

Sources : Primary data, 2021 (to be analysed)

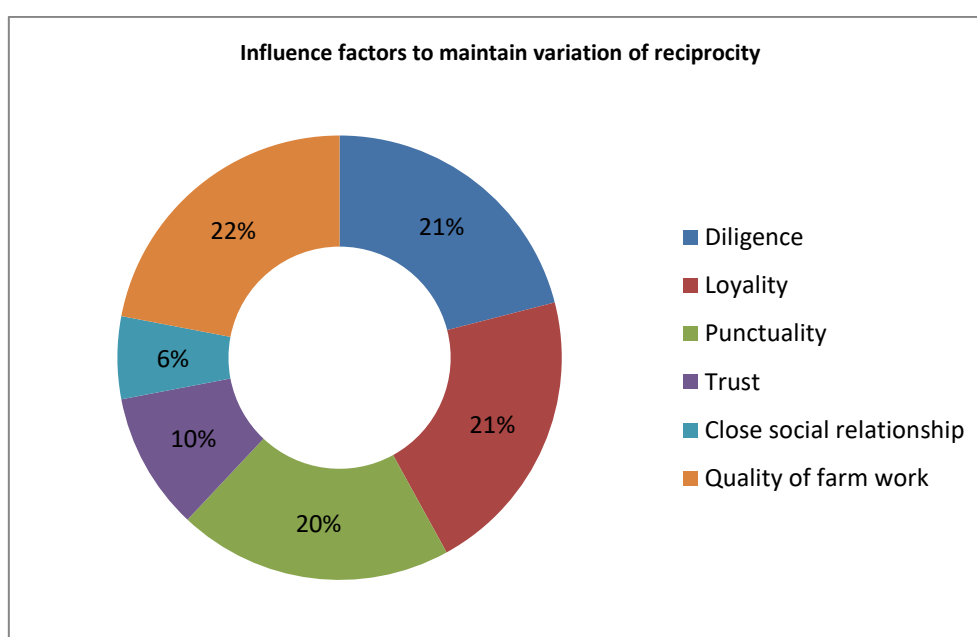
If the reciprocity is symmetrical and permanent near the city, it is carried out by both parties by mutual agreement, but for the area that far from the city it is also joint using determines by the level of wages. Furthermore,

non-permanent symmetrical conditions often occur in villages that are relatively close to the city. Workers have a variety of jobs. It could be in one day workers serve two or three patrons at once. For rural areas that are far from urban

areas, most of the work is determined by the owner farmers, but some rural workers are trusted labor groups, so they can do several jobs at once.

There are times when these farmworkers also work in more than one place, but in this condition, the number is relatively limited. A third variation is revealed in the type of permanent asymmetric reciprocity. This type often occurs in the reciprocal relationship of farmers in rural areas far from urban areas. This happens because of the scarcity of the number of jobs (Wiwiek R. Adawiyah, 2021), so the owner farmers tend to determine and benefit from the cooperative relationship that occurs. This condition is very rare in rural areas near urban areas. The diversity of jobs and the scarcity of available labor allow for more mobility (Courtois & Subervie, 2014 ; Blau, 1974), so bargaining with landowners benefits both parties. These social realities can be seen in Table 3.

There have been some changes in the pattern of adaptation of farmers in reciprocity in the last ten years, but almost no fundamental change in this pattern per region. There is still some found maintenance of behavioral patterns, which the landowners tend to try to keep the workforce. In many ways, this patterns didn't quite working out. Sometimes he even loses because he has to queue for workers to work, but in villages far from urban areas, he is still quite successful. Furthermore, the underlying reason is that there are still various types of reciprocity. Based on observations, the quality of work is most prominent, followed by compliance and expertise, then punctuality, trust, and social closeness. Many opinions (Yılmaz et al., 2020) state that social relations in the village are very influential, but in the agricultural sector, work relations and aspects of it quality as well as obedience to patrons are very decisive for people who are still used in reciprocal relationships. These conditions are summarized and can be seen in Figure 2.



**Figure 2. Influence Factors to Maintain Variation of Reciprocity**

Based on the results of the study, it was revealed that there are a number of factors that cause farm laborers to maintain variations in reciprocity. The most determining factors are the quality of work, craftsmanship, loyalty and performance at work. According to them, trust is important, but not the only one. They are more confident if the quality of their work is good and have perseverance (craft) and loyalty to their work tends to last a long time. Farmers generally pay more attention to the quality of

their work. Some of the farmers and farm laborers who were interviewed stated the following. For example, Mr. TSM stated:

"If I see people who are trusted to work for decades, their work looks good, doesn't demand too high pay and of course has loyalty"

Therefore, the quality of work even at the grass root level remains an important factor in maintaining reciprocal relationships. This is in line with the opinion (Jerome, 2017 ; Dumasari et al., 2019).

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

It is found that there are variations in the form of reciprocity based on work wages and the outpouring of time allocation and wage levels. High and intensive time spent in labor tends to get benefits in the form of high wages, and other kind of rewards. Beside all of it there is also an interesting social dimension, namely the discovery of other social rewards that are not only quantitative but in the form of other forms of social services, such as: extra provisions, free cigarettes for those who want to smoke and other kind of hospitality.

It could be concluded that it can be recommended to farmer groups and lawmakers at the regional level, that it is necessary to develop the level of wages that are acceptable enough by the workers time spent. For farmers with asymmetrical relationships there are also need a consistent maintenance. While for reducing social inequality for farmworkers in asymmetrical relationships, it is necessary to have dynamics internal farmer group which being supported by local government policies that encourage more standard labor wage regulations, which will increase the purchasing power of farming communities, especially farmworkers to a better level.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writing team would like to thank the Directorate General of Education Higher, Research and Technology – Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia for providing research funds. Without this help, of course, this research would not be possible. Thanks are also conveyed to the Chairperson of LPPM, Jenderal Sudirman University has supported administratively and academically so that it could be accomplished. The writing team is also indebted to the farming communities living in the two districts of Banyumas and Purbalingga to who have helped us answer various questions. The author's debt of gratitude also goes to all research assistants who helped carry out all of the research activities.

### REFERENCES

- Baldassarri, D. (2015). Cooperative networks: Altruism, group solidarity, reciprocity, and sanctioning in ugandan producer organizations. *American Journal of Sociology*, 121(2), 355–395. <https://doi.org/10.1086/682418>
- Blau, P. M. (1974). Presidential address: Parameters of social structure. *American Sociological Review*, 39(5), 615–635.
- Courtois, P., & Subervie, J. (2014). Farmer bargaining power and market information services. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 97(3), 953–977. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ajae/aau051>
- Diana, N., Idris, M., & Siwar, C. (2015). From poverty reduction to poverty relief: Impact of non-farm income in integrated agriculture development area (IADA) Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia. *Geografia - Malaysian Journal of Society and Space*, 11(1), 32–41.
- Diekmann, A. (2004). The power of reciprocity: Fairness, reciprocity, and stakes in variants of the dictator game. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 48(4), 487–505. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002704265948>
- Dumasari, ., Budiningsih, S., Darmawan, W., & Santosa, I. (2019). The intensity of social capital function to strengthening the bargaining position of craftsmen in the marketing souvenirs of processed coconut waste. *Jurnal Ilmu Pertanian Indonesia*, 24(3), 227–236. <https://doi.org/10.18343/jipi.24.3.227>
- Dumasari, D., Dharmawan, B., Budiningsih, S., & Santosa, I. (2021). Sensitivity-Based Adaptive Management in Empowering Quality Cococraft Craftmen. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship*, 25(1), 1–12. <https://www.abacademies.org/articles/sensitivitybased-adaptive-management-in-impowering-quality-cococraft-craftsmen.pdf>
- Dumasari, Darmawan, W., Ismangil, Dharmawan, B., & Santosa, I. (2020). Empowerment of subsistence craftsmen through the adoption of environmentally friendly cocodust production technology. *International Journal on Advanced Science, Engineering and Information*

- Technology*, 10(2), 691–702.  
<https://doi.org/10.18517/ijaseit.10.2.8522>
- Fang, Y., Fan, J., Shen, M., & Song, M. (2014). Sensitivity of livelihood strategy to livelihood capital in mountain areas: Empirical analysis based on different settlements in the upper reaches of the Minjiang River, China. *Ecological Indicators*, 38, 225–235.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolind.2013.11.007>
- Homans, G. C. (1974). Social behavior: Its elementary forms, Revised ed. In *Social behavior: Its elementary forms, Revised ed.* Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Jana, R., Bandyopadhyay, S., & Choudhuri, A. K. (2013). Reciprocity among farmers in farming system research: Application of social network analysis. *Journal of Human Ecology*, 41(1), 45–51.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09709274.2013.11906552>
- Jerome, S. (2017). A study on agricultural marketing strategies and challenges faced by the ponmalai santhai (local market) farmers in Tiruchirappalli. *International Journal of Economics and Management Studies*, 4(9), 15–20.
- Lanfranchi, M., Giannetto, C., Abbate, T., & Dimitrova, V. (2015). Agriculture and the social farm: Expression of the multifunctional model of agriculture as a solution to the economic crisis in rural areas. *Bulgarian Journal of Agricultural Science*, 21(4), 711–718.
- M.B. Miles and A.M. Huberman. (1991). *Designing Qualitative Research*.  
<https://doi.org/10.7748/ns.30.25.33.s40>
- Martínez Valle, L., & Martínez Godoy, D. (2019). Territorial dynamics and social differentiation among peasants in the northern highlands of Ecuador. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 19(4), 635–653.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/joac.12322>
- Molm, L. D., Schaefer, D. R., & Collett, J. L. (2007). The value of reciprocity. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 70(2), 199–217.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/019027250707000208>
- Santosa, I., Muslihudin, & Adawiyah, W. R. (2020). Changes in reciprocity: From patron – client relationships to commercial transactions in rural Central Java. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, 14(4), 846–858.
- Santosa, I., Muslihudin, M., & Adawiyah, W. R. (2019a). Current form of reciprocity between land owners peasant and peasant laborer. *Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 8(8), 53–59.  
<https://doi.org/10.18533/journal.v8i8.1725>
- Santosa, I., Muslihudin, M., & Adawiyah, W. R. (2019b). Current form of reciprocity between land owners peasant and peasant laborer. *Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 8(8), 53–59.  
<https://doi.org/10.18533/journal.v8i8.1725>
- Suartha, I. D. G., Wedastra, M. S., & Artika, I. B. E. (2014). Model empowerment of rural poor farmer women through agribusiness base entrepreneurship development in the regency of West Lombok. *International Journal of Geology, Agriculture and Environment Sciences*, 2(October), 2–5.
- Thomas, M., & Caillon, S. (2016). Effects of farmer social status and plant biocultural value on seed circulation networks in Vanuatu. *Ecology and Society*, 21(2).  
<https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-08378-210213>
- Vanwey, L., & Vithayathil, T. (2013). Off-farm Work among Rural Households: A Case Study in the Brazilian Amazon. *Rural Sociology*, 78(1), 29–50.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1549-0831.2012.00094.x>
- Wiwiek R. Adawiyah, I. S. M. (2021). Towards Balanced Reciprocity: The Relationship between Landowners and Landless Peasants in the Rural Community. *Turkish Journal of Computer and Mathematics Education (TURCOMAT)*, 12(6), 2345–2353.  
<https://doi.org/10.17762/turcomat.v12i6.5283>
- Yılmaz, H. Ö., Aslan, R., & Unal, C. (2020). Effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on eating habits and food purchasing behaviors of university students. *Kesmas*, 15(3), 154–159.  
<https://doi.org/10.21109/KESMAS.V15I3.3897>